A Short
DISCOURSE
Concerning the
CERTAINTY
OF A
Future STATE.

In which

It is Demonſtrated beyond all Reaſonable Contradiction,

THAT

The chief Wiſdom and Safety of every Human Perſon, does conſiſt in Believing, That after Death there will be to all Mankind an other Life, in which the Righteous ſhall be Everlaſtingly Happy, and the Wicked ſuffer endleſs Puniſhments.

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A Short DISCOURSE Concerning the CERTAINTY OF A Future STATE.

AT a time in which the unuſual Wickedneſs of Mankind is ſo great, as to cauſe them to wiſh that there may be no Life for Sinners to be Puniſh'd in, after Death: And from wiſhing to proceed at laſt ſo far, as to be perſuaded to believe, that there will be no ſuch ſtate. *At ſuch a time* (I ſay) it cannot but be very neceſſary, in order to convince Men and Women of this their Folly, and to prevent their drawing others into the ſame Error, by their evil Notions and bad Examples; to prove

by ſome plain and moſt undeniable Arguments, that 'tis the ſafeſt, and therefore the wiſeſt way to believe, that Death will not put an end to the Beings of Mankind, but that they ſhall Live again after they Die, and be Happy for ever, or elſe everlaſtingly Miſerable, as their general Actions in this World have been either Virtuous or Vitious. *That by this means* ſome ſtop may be put to the miſerable State of thoſe who feel the evil Effects of Diſhoneſty and Debauchery, and are yet in danger of being much more Unhappy, ſhould the Sins of Men become more Vile and Common, by the more common Disbelief of a future State of Rewards and Puniſhments.

And the Arguments by which I will endeavour to work in Men a Belief of this Truth, ſhall be ſuch as the natural Light, *or moſt honeſt Reaſon of Men* does afford, or divine Revelation dictate to us. The firſt of which Arguments, to wit, *thoſe that are only Rational*, do make it very probable, that there will be an other Life to all Mankind after Death. And the laſt, *which are the Teſtimonies of Holy Scripture*, do aſſure us that it will be ſo, as plainly as we can be aſſured by any Teſtimony. So that from theſe two kind of Arguments we have the greateſt Proof that ſuch a Truth is capable of, *or that can be deſired by any reaſonable Man*, for the certainty of ſuch a Life as is altogether future, and not capable of being any ways known by preſent Experience.

Now in order to prove by rational Arguments, that there will be to all Mankind an other Life after Death, it will be needful to prove in the firſt place, That there is a God, or one who is the firſt cauſe of all Things, *and of human Beings in particular*; and that he tranſcends all Mankind in the rational Perfections of Wiſdom, Goodneſs, and Juſtice; for

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till this is done no other Arguments from Reaſon can prove the probability of a future State, neither can this be proved from Scripture, for we muſt firſt know that there is a God, before we can believe the Scripture to be his Word, or prove thereby any kind of Notion to be true.

And the moſt certain way to prove that there is ſuch a God, will be to conſider. 1. That Self-evident Truth that there are ſuch Beings as are called Men and Women, and that in our Days all theſe do derive their Beings by generation from others who are of their own Nature or Kind that lived before them; *and by Conſequence* it muſt be true, that thoſe others did alſo receive their Beings from ſuch kind of Parents, and that it hath been ſo always throughout the ſeveral Ages wherein Mankind have had a Being in the World, from whence it will follow, that all human Beings did proceed in ſome time paſt from one Man and one Woman, *who were the firſt of their Kind.* For as all the whole number of human Perſons that have ever lived in the World to the Day before this preſent Day, did become more by the number born into the World this preſent Day; ſo if from the whole number that ever have had a Being when this Day is ended, we do ſubſtract the whole number Born this Day, *which may be done in ſuppoſition tho' not in fact*, the number that remains will be ſo much leſs; and by conſequence were there a continual Subſtraction made backward, the whole number of Men that ever had had a Being before, will ſo leſſen each Day, that at laſt there would be a Day in which no more then four human Beings had ever lived, and then it will be as plain, that the Day before the fourth was Born there were but three, and then the Day before this third was born there could be but two, to

wit, one Man and one Woman, which by common or natural Generation, were the Parents of that third Perſon.

And 'tis alſo evident, that theſe two Perſons could not derive their Beings from human Parents, *or be Born into the World the ſame way that all others were who deſcended from them*; becauſe there was not any other Man and Woman in being before them, neither could either of theſe give any ways a Being unto it ſelf, becauſe no Perſon can act towards any end before it is in Being; *and by conſequence* could not give to it ſelf a Being; ſince to ſuppoſe this, is to ſuppoſe, *that it was in Being before it was*, which is a plain contradiction. From which Conſideration we then may very ſafely infer, that this Man and Woman who were the Parents of the third Perſon that ever did live in the World, did receive their Beings from ſome other who lived before them; which Being could not be the ſame in Nature that they were, to wit, human Beings, *becauſe they themſelves were the very firſt human Beings that did exiſt.*

Now this original Author or firſt Cauſe of the firſt Man and Woman, *from whom all others are lineally deſcended*, is the only Being who in a proper ſenſe can be the God of all Mankind, or that hath the higheſt Authority over them; for none can have a right to this moſt ſupream Dignity, but one that by Creation as a common Father to all Beings, did give the firſt Being to thoſe two Perſons, from whom all other human Beings are deſcended.

And from hence we may infer with the greateſt reaſon, That *the God and Father* of Mankind, muſt excel them in all the Perfections that can truly be aſcribed

aſcribed to them; for as Mankind do all derive their Beings from him alone, ſo they muſt derive from him alſo all their Perfections. But right reaſon ſhews very plainly, that God cannot make any other Being equal in all Perfection unto himſelf, becauſe he cannot injure or degrade his own Dignity, which doth conſiſt in being the higheſt *or above all others* of what Nature or Kind ſoever they be: For could he do this, *that is, could he make others equal to himſelf*, he then would ceaſe to be God moſt High, which muſt be one who has no equal.

Now the chief Perfections found in Mankind next to that of their Beings, are thoſe *which are termed Rational*, among which, Wiſdom, Goodneſs, and Juſtice are the chief; it is therefore manifeſt from what hath before been ſaid, that God the original Father or firſt Cauſe of the Beings of all Mankind, does far excel them in Wiſdom, Goodneſs and Juſtice: For as he derives his Being from none, and therefore in reſpect of this his manner of Exiſtence, *which ſeems to be the greateſt of all Perfection*, does excel vaſtly all thoſe whoſe Beings are derived from him; ſo his rational Perfections alſo of Wiſdom, Goodneſs, and Juſtice, which are eſſential to him, muſt excel theſe kind of Perfections which are only communicated to Men, and who therefore cannot be ſo Wiſe, Good and Juſt, as God is.

And having thus found by the conſideration of the Being of God, who is the original Cauſe of the Exiſtence of all Mankind, that he does excel the moſt Wiſe, Good and Juſt among Men in all theſe rational Perfections; ſo we may come to underſtand likewiſe from theſe Conſiderations, *what the*

Will

Will of God is in reſpect of our Duty, or what he does require us to do.

For if we conſider what kind of Creatures God, *who is our Creator or firſt Cauſe*, hath made us to be; we cannot but conclude, that it is his Will that we ſhould act agreeable to the common Natures which all Mankind have received from him. Now 'tis certain, that he hath made us capable *by the due uſe of the Faculties of our Mind*, to find out that there is ſuch a Being as God, or a firſt Cauſe of all Things; and that he does excel all other Beings in Perfection, *and by conſequence* that he muſt be the moſt Glorious of all Beings; and 'tis likewiſe certain, that we are ſuch by Nature, that we cannot but Love and Admire that moſt which to our Underſtanding does ſeem to be moſt excellent: Moreover our Nature which we do receive from God the Author of our Beings, is ſuch that ſome Things and ſome Actions, *whether they be our own or that of others*, will be hurtful either to our Body, our Eſtate, or our Reputation, tho' we ſhould endeavour to eſteem them otherwiſe; and on the contrary there are others which are ſo naturally for our true Good, that we cannot but be moſt Eaſie and Happy in ſuch Circumſtances.

Now 'tis certain ſince the moſt wiſe God hath made us to be ſuch kind of Beings by Nature, that it is alſo his Will that we ſhould act ſo always as does become the Nobleneſs of our rational Faculties, and is conduceable to the true Well-being and Happineſs of all human Perſons, for it is contrary to the dictates of all true Reaſon to ſuppoſe, that it is not the Will of God that his Creatures ſhould act conformable to their Natures, or underſtand that which they are capable of knowing, and to

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chuſe to do that only which is for their good; *for if this ſhould be the Caſe, a prudent Man then would be wiſer than God.* For a wiſe Man will never perfect any kind of Invention, with a deſign that when it is finiſhed, it ſhall not effect that for which he hath made it fit. But God, as was ſhewed before, cannot but be much wiſer than the moſt underſtanding Man, and therefore his Will and Deſign in making human Beings muſt needs be this, that they ſhould do that which they are fitted for, and act always in ſuch a manner as will not be hurtful to, but truly good for their Natures; from whence it will follow, that for Men to act thus, is to employ the Abilities of their Mind to find out the Being of God, and to diſcover as much as they can of his moſt excellent and glorious Perfections; and having done this in a degree ſuitable to the faculties of Reaſon that God hath endowed them with, that they ſhould then place on him alone the chiefeſt of their Affections, and love him above all other Beings, *ſince he is more Excellent than any other, and more Worthy of our higheſt Eſteem, than the greateſt among Men, or any of the Honours, or Riches, or Pleaſures of this preſent State.* And laſtly, that we ſhould conſider truly what is deſtructive to the common Good and Well-being of all Mankind, and avoid it conſtantly that it may not hurt either our ſelves or others; and be careful to practiſe on the contrary all thoſe Duties which by the common Experience of the beſt and wiſeſt Men, are found to be needful to render the Condition either of our ſelves or others moſt Bleſſed, or Eaſie and Happy in this World; *for this is certainly the Will of God,* becauſe 'tis ſuitable to our Natures and becomes Mankind.

And now from what hath been ſaid concerning God and his moſt tranſcendent Perfections, and concerning the natural Duty of all Mankind in doing the Will of God, *I will proceed to prove*, that there will be a future State to all Mankind, or another Life after Death, both to Good and Bad, to Rich and to poor People.

In the firſt place therefore I will endeavour to ſhew that there will be a future State to all Good or Righteous Men, and this I will do from the conſideration *of the tranſcendent Goodneſs of God.* For if the original Author or firſt Father of all Mankind, does excel in this rational Perfection the beſt among Men, he cannot then but be more kind to thoſe that are Virtuous *or act agreeable to that natural Duty which his Will does moſt certainly require*, than he will be to thoſe who act contrary, or hate to ſearch after the Knowledge of God, and to honour him as he deſerves, and love to do that which is deſtructive to the True-well-being either of themſelves or others; for a Man who hath in him *the rational Perfection of true Goodneſs* in any viſible degree, will always bear a more kind Affection to thoſe who are Virtuous than he will do to vitious Perſons; and if he hath Power and Ability, will never fail to do more to make the one Happy, than he will do to make the other ſo; for the trueſt Love will be fixt there moſt, where we find Men act moſt agreeable to that which is their natural Duty, and does moſt promote the common Good. *A good Father or a good Maſter* will always love thoſe Children or thoſe Servants beſt, who are moſt diligent in their Duty, and do moſt readily comply to the dictates of their juſt and reaſonable Commands; and will beſtow greater Favours upon, and make their Condition more

more eaſie than that of others, who are wilfully Wicked and ſcorn to be Obedient; and therefore much more will God do this, who in the rational Perfection of true Goodneſs, does far excel the beſt of Men, or the moſt kind Father and honeſt natur'd Maſter.

But yet we do not always ſee this done in this Life; for now many who take the greateſt care to know and do that which their Creator wills they ſhould do, in Loving and Glorifying the Father of their Beings moſt, and in being kindly Affectioned to their fellow Brerhren, and avoiding to the utmoſt of their Power, the doing of ſuch things which will be hurtful either to themſelves or others. *Many of theſe*, I ſay, do find but very hard fare in the World, and commonly live in greater Poverty and Miſery than many wicked People. Yea, they are often ſubject to the moſt vile Reproaches and inhuman Perſecutions, for the ſake of thoſe divine Truths which they do profeſs, and the good Life they live; *the Wicked being always Haters of thoſe who do not approve of their own baſe and filthy Actions, and whoſe more perfect Knowledge of Truth ſhames their own ſtupid Ignorance in divine Matters*; it being always ſeen that ſober and wiſe Men, who dare not act contrary to what they know to be the Will of God, do become the Scoff and Scorn, and are expos'd to the Rage and Fury of great Sinners, who do moſt unreaſonably value their own Folly and Madneſs; and in the mean time great numbers of this latter ſort who have no regard to the Glory of God, and that moſt generally do that which tends to make good and honeſt Men miſerable, do enjoy the greateſt worldly Plenty a long time, and have ſo much Power, Authority and Riches, as ſrees them from thoſe

Miſeries

Miſeries and Perſecutions which others endure, who live good and virtuous Lives.

Now as 'tis highly reaſonable to conclude from the Conſideration of God's tranſcendent Goodneſs, that he will be kinder to good Men, and make their State and Condition much more Bleſs'd and Happy than he will do that of the Wicked; ſo this Felicity muſt be beſtowed upon the Righteous after they Die, *ſince it is not done before Death.* The time of this preſent Life being a State, in which the beſt of Men are very often the moſt Poor and Miſerable, being hated becauſe of their Virtue; and are likewiſe hindered by the Tenderneſs of their Conſciences from doing thoſe unreaſonable and diſhoneſt Deeds, *by which moſt times the greateſt Eſtates are gotten*; and that God will thus be kinder to good Men, and make them more Bleſſed in ſome Life after Death, than the Wicked now are, is moſt certain, becauſe ſhould he never do this at all, a good Father then or a good Maſter would be more good than God, *which can never be*, as before hath been ſhewed. For the God who hath endowed any human Perſon with that rational Perfection of Goodneſs, which makes them more kind to others who are good than to ſuch as are wilfully Wicked, and act contrary to their natural Duty, muſt himſelf tranſcend in an infinite degree the beſt of Men, and beſtow upon all that act agreeable to the Natures he hath given them, a greater degree of Eaſe and Peace in ſome Life after Death, than any of the Wicked do or can enjoy in this State, wherein their Plenty and Eaſe does generally exceed that of better Men.

And as from the Goodneſs of God we may with great Reaſon conclude, that there will be ſome future

ture State to all good Men, wherein they ſhall enjoy greater Bleſſings than any wicked Men ſhall at any time do; *So alſo from the Conſideration of the moſt excellent Perfection of Juſtice in God*, we may infer or conclude, that there will be a future State to all bad Men, wherein they ſhall be Puniſhed for tranſgreſſing the manifeſt Will of God, or acting contrary to the common good of themſelves or others.

For as no Man who hath in him the rational Perfection of true Juſtice, when the Office of a Prince or of any other Inferiour Magiſtrate is conferr'd upon him, *that by proper means he may deter the Wicked from doing Evil, and encourage the Righteous to go on in thoſe good Ways which tend to the common Welfare of the World*; will fail to inflict due Puniſhment ſome time or other upon all thoſe who wilfully do Evil to others, either by an ungodly Example or a wicked Practice; even ſo will God do this, and be much more axact and particular in his Corrections: For in the rational Perfection of true Juſtice, he does far tranſcend the moſt juſt and righteous Governor among Men, and hath alſo a far more perfect Wiſdom to know the juſt Deſert of every Sinner, and a Power to do that which in many Caſes a righteous Magiſtrate cannot do; for many acts of Wickedneſs are done ſo ſecretly, that no Man who is ordained to execute Juſtice can know thereof; and ſeveral wicked Men have ſo much Authority and Wealth in the World, as to be raiſed thereby above the Power of being puniſhed by others, whoſe Hearts are honeſt and ſincere in their Endeavours, to avenge the Wrongs of injured Men upon thoſe who did the Evil; in all which Caſes God is the only ſupream Governour, who can inflict due Puniſhment on theſe Sinners.

But we do not find that this is always done by him in this Life; for many of the moſt cruel Tyrants and bloody Perſecutors, and a great number of others who are guilty of the baſeſt Acts of Injuſtice, the moſt horrid Falſhoods, the moſt filthy Whoredoms, the moſt beaſtly Drunkenneſs, the moſt blaſphemous Oaths and Curſes, with a great number of other ſcandalous and odious Crimes; do eſcape in this Life that Puniſhment which is juſtly due to ſuch Villanies *thus acted in ſpite of God, who hath endowed all Men with Reaſon ſufficient to know that they ought to do otherwiſe, in order to promote the common Good.* Now we may reaſonably conclude, ſince the Wicked are not Puniſhed at preſent for acting contrary to their reaſonable Duty, that they ſhall be Scourged ſeverely for theſe Crimes in ſome other Life after Death; for if God the moſt Juſt of all Governors, and the original Author of all Juſtice in Righteous Men, ſhould not avenge ſome time or other the Cauſe of thoſe who are thus Oppreſt and Wronged by the Villany and Baſeneſs of the Wicked, who are guilty of ſuch Acts *as tend to deprive the World of its publick Peace and Welfare.* He would not be ſo truly Juſt as many juſt Magiſtrates. But 'tis moſt certain that the alwiſe God who hath implanted by Nature in wiſe Men, a due Senſe of the undoubted Reaſonableneſs and Equity of Puniſhing thoſe who do Evil, when Authority is given them ſo to do, *in order to preſerve to Mankind their juſt Rights, and to ſecure their publick Peace and preſent Happineſs:* 'Tis I ſay moſt certain, that God who has implanted this Notion of Juſtice in Men, does far excel the beſt of Men in this rational Perfection; and therefore will Puniſh all thoſe Sinners one time or other who do wilfully continue in their Wickedneſs without Repentance, which Puniſhment

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muſt be inflicted in ſome other State of Life, ſince they are not always Puniſhed according to the reaſonable or due Deſert of their Crimes in this World; in the doing of which God will not only do Juſtice to his wronged Creatures, in avenging on the Heads of the Wicked the Blood of the Innocent, the Oppreſſions that they have lain under, and the Loſſes they have ſuſtained through their Injuſtice; but he will demonſtrate alſo to the Wicked themſelves, *who have ungratefully Contemned and Scorned his Divine Will*, that they are ſubject to his moſt Sovereign Dominion and Power, and ought to have lived agreeable to the Nature which he gave them, by promoting the common Good both of themſelves and others.

We may likewiſe conclude very reaſonably, that there will be a future State from the conſideration of the general Belief of this Doctrin among all the moſt honeſt, or juſt, and innocent Minded Inhabitants of the preſent World, and thoſe Fears and Terrors of Mind, which do moſt generally attend on the Actions of prophane and wicked Men.

It is evident from the Accounts given in ancient Hiſtory, and from the Relations of them who have Travelled into the furtheſt diſtant Parts of the known World, that the beſt and moſt honeſt People in every Nation do believe *in ſome Senſe or other*, that they who Dye ſhall enjoy Happineſs after Death, or feel Miſery according as they have done Good or Evil in this Life: *Which Notion* found ſo generally among all thoſe who do endeavour to Live moſt agreeable to the Will of God, whether the Knowledge of it be derived by Tradition from *Adam* the firſt human Father of all Mankind, or whether it be inferred by them rationally from ſome

other certain Truth, *which may well be, as before was ſhewed*, does demonſtrate, That the Belief of ſuch a future State is truly rational; for if it were not rational or agreeable to thoſe natural Senſes of Truth, which are counted firſt Principles or Truths, which in a good State of Mind, Men cannot but know to be Truths; It would never have been entertained ſo generally among all thoſe who have loved Goodneſs beſt, or that have been moſt Juſt and truly Merciful, or Kind-hearted in their Actions: Now all thoſe Notions that are rational, are true in ſome Senſe or other, becauſe Reaſon and Truth are in effect the ſame thing; for nothing can be True which is Unreaſonable, nor can any Doctrin be Falſe which certainly is Reaſonable, or agrees with natural Principles.

The Doctrin therefore of a future State is very likely to be a Truth, becauſe 'tis ſo agreeable to the Reaſon of all the wiſeſt and beſt Men in the World, *and is denied by none but Fools or Sinners*; there being no account of any one in any Age or Nation, who did poſitively deny it in all Senſes, *if he was any ways eminent for Goodneſs and Righteouſneſs of Life*; than which there can be nothing more probable in Reaſon to prove a Doctrin to be true: For 'tis much more reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that thoſe who Live moſt agreeable to God's Will, and ſtrive by their Virtue to promote the common Well-being of all Mankind, ſhould be more in the right than thoſe are, who being moſt Wicked do disbelieve this Doctrin. Certainly there can nothing be more Abſurd and Ridiculous, than to imagine that the alwiſe God who loves nothing in his Creatures, but that Goodneſs which becomes the Natures he hath given them, or tends to his Glory and their own common Happineſs; will take ſo little care of thoſe who

who are moſt Virtuous, as not to give them a better underſtanding of Truth *by his divine Influence or Spirit*, than he will do to the Enemies of his Glory who deſpiſe his Will, and would, could they but once attain to the Power, Beggar all others, and Domineer over, and Abuſe them at their Will and Pleaſure. 'Tis certain that as the Practice of good Men is the beſt and moſt noble, ſo that belief of future Rewards to the Righteous, and of Puniſhment to the Wicked, which does engage them to it muſt needs be the moſt noble Principles, and what are ſo muſt needs be the trueſt.

And as the conſideration of the general Belief of a future State among all truly good and honeſt Men in every Nation, does make it very reaſonable to believe, that there will be another Life after Death; ſo the general Fears and Terrors of Mind, which more or leſs do attend on the Actions of wicked Men, are a good Cauſe why Men ſhould believe this Doctrin.

There are but few who do not know either by their own Experience, or by Relation from others *who are worthy of Credit*; that a very great number of the moſt heinous Sinners, have on certain extraordinary Occaſions confeſſed, That after the committing of ſome horrid Villanies as that of Murder, Adultery, falſe Witneſs, ſecret Treachery, or ſuch like; they could never be at eaſe in their Minds, being haunted continually with ſome unaccountable Fears and Terrors, even in ſuch Caſes where their Sins were committed ſo ſecretly, that in all likelihood none could know of it beſides God and themſelves; or where the Actors of thoſe ignoble and baſe Crimes, were ſo great in Power and Dignity, as to be above all danger of Puniſhment from thoſe

below them. Now this ſecret Dread and Fear can proceed from nothing but ſome kind of natural Senſe, implanted in them by God to admoniſh them, that notwithſtanding all their ſuppoſed Security in this World, they ſhall ſuffer Evil on that account ſome time or other, which muſt be after Death if it be not Inflicted before; for had not there been a purpoſe in God to do this, he would not thus by Inſtinct or ſome divine Influence have forwarned them of their Danger.

Some indeed who have attained by cuſtom to a great ſtock of Impudence, or have for a long time been inured to the Sin of Lying, may be ſo Bold and Daring as to deny this to be their Caſe, *chuſing rather to be Damn'd in ſilence, than to acknowledge their Dread and Fear in the time of their Health.* But the Laſhes of many of their Conſciences could not be hid when they came to lye upon a Death-Bed; for at that time many of the moſt impudent Sinners who before did defie the Power both of God and Man, have bewailed and lamented the Folly and Baſeneſs not only of their open Sins, but of ſuch Crimes alſo as no other Man knew of before that time; which trouble they never would have expreſſed nor made ſuch a Confeſſion, if they had not had ſome internal Reaſon to conclude that future Evils did attend them after Death; for they could not then but be ſenſible, that by Death they ſhould be freed from all poſſibility of Suffering temporal Puniſhments, becauſe where there is no Life there is no Senſation; but tho' they could not but know all this, yet their Fears and Terrors did always abound moſt in their laſt Moments, inſomuch that many who before this did ſet a good Face upon a very bad Caſe, appearing outwardly to others to have no inward Trouble, were ſo ſtrangely terrified at the ap-

approach of their Dying-Hour, with the fear of thoſe deplorable Miſeries which they could not forbear to ſuſpect would follow after, that they could not conceal their Dread from others; which makes it evident, that their own Reaſon and the Self-conſciencioufneſs of what they did deſerve for their evil Doings, did ſtrongly dictate to them, that they ſhould ſuffer much worſe Evils upon the account of their Wickedneſs, than any they had ſuffered in this Life either inwardly in their Mind, or outwardly in their Bodies, their Eſtates, or their Reputation.

There be ſome I know will ſay, That theſe Fears of wicked Men, do not prove that there will be a future State of Puniſhment, becauſe they may very well proceed from the cuſtom of believing in their younger Years, that which then was taught them by others, concerning a Life to come, and of what diſmal Torments Sinners ſhould ſuffer therein; which hath made ſuch a firm Impreſſion upon their Minds, that they could never free themſelves from it afterwards.

But to this it may be reply'd, That the true reaſon of theſe Fears muſt proceed from ſome other Cauſe, and not from ſuch kind of Impreſſions as is here pretended; becauſe if this Trouble and Concern of Mind upon a Death-Bed. did not proceed from ſome natural Dictate or Senſation implanted in the Mind by the God of Nature, to forwarn them of the certainty of future Puniſhments. But were the effect only of Education, then the contrary Belief, *which moſt of theſe notorious Sinners have endeavoured to ſettle in their own Minds*, would have freed them from the Power of all former Impreſſions made upon them, concerning the notion of a Life of everlaſting Puniſhments to come after Death.

We ſee in other Caſes by many inſtances, that thoſe who have been Educated in ſome erronious Faith, were not ſo ſtrongly Impreſt upon thereby, as to be uncapable afterwards of being convinc'd of their Miſtake, when they did perceive better reaſon to believe the contrary; for in ſuch Caſes they have rejected theſe their Errors ſo abſolutely, as never afterwards to ſuppoſe there was any Truth in them; and if it be ſo in other Matters, then certainly it would be ſo alſo in the caſe of a Life to come, *if that Doctrin were really an Error*; for could Men ſee better and plainer Reaſon to prove it to be falſe, than to believe it to be true, they would be wholly freed from all Fears of ſuch a State when they come to Dye.

Yet we find it quite otherwiſe in great numbers of the Wicked, who have done all they could to believe, that there was no ſuch State after Death; for after all their greateſt Endeavours to fix in themſelves an aſſurance, that Death would put an end to their Lives and Beings for ever. *They did not dare to truſt to this Notion when they came to Dye*, but were horribly Affraid that it would be otherwiſe; and could not but ſuſpect, after all was ſaid that could be ſaid againſt the being of a future State, that it yet was poſſible they might live an other Life; and this made them at the approach of their laſt Hour, when the Danger did ſeem to threaten them moſt nearly, to be ſo full of Dread and Confuſion at the remembrance of their own former Folly and Madneſs.

Some indeed whoſe abominable and moſt filthy Luſt, or Cruelty and Injuſtice of Life hath been ſo great, as either to harden their Hearts ſo as to be uncapable of remorſe, or render them inſenſible of

of all Danger; or which is more often the caſe, does make them aſhamed in the higheſt degree, of the wretched Folly and Baſeneſs of their own Crimes. Some ſuch Perſons, I ſay, do ſeem to have little or no inward Trouble when they come to Dye, or elſe do conceal it all they can from others, chuſing to Dye ſilently in a State of Damnation, rather than to expoſe the Senſe they then have of their own Madneſs and Folly to other Men. But the number of theſe is but ſmall in compariſon to that of others, who in the laſt Moments of this preſent Life, have confeſſed the Senſe they had of their own Danger and Folly; ſo that it is very reaſonable to conclude, That there will be another Life or State of Senſe, wherein all thoſe whoſe Lives are not reformed before they Dye, in a ſaving degree, ſhall ſuffer all thoſe Puniſhments which their wilful Sins do juſtly deſerve at the Hands of that God, whoſe moſt reaſonable Will they have reſiſted.

I might ſet down ſeveral other Arguments to prove, by reaſon that there will be a future State of Rewards to good Men, and Puniſhments to the Wicked; but theſe which have already been mentioned are the chiefeſt and plaineſt to be underſtood by the meaneſt Capacities, who are as much concerned in the knowledge of all that Truth which is proper to effect a good Life in Men, as Riche: and more knowing People are. And therefore I ſhall paſs by all the other Arguments of leſs moment, and proceed to thoſe more certain proofs of a Life to come, which are contained in the Holy Scriptures.

And the reaſon why I term the Scripture Proofs more certain than thoſe others which depend only on rational Inferences; is, becauſe the Arguments from

Reaſon before-mentioned, do only make it probable that there will be a future State; for they do not prove it ſo plainly as many other Truths may be proved; and beſides they leave us wholly in the Dark as to the manner how we ſhall be capable of enjoying Happineſs, or feeling Miſery after we are Dead, and turned into Duſt by means of Corruption. But in the Holy Scripture theſe Truths are all revealed in the plaineſt manner; for they do not only teſtifie in the moſt expreſs Terms, that there will be another Life to all Mankind; but they ſhew alſo how Men ſhall be capable of Rewards and Puniſhments after Death, and that is *by being raiſed from the Dead*, or redeemed from the Grave by Jeſus Chriſt, who is ſaid in the Scripture to be *an Horn of Salvation, which God hath raiſed up for us in the Houſe of his Servant* David, Luke 1. 69. *That we might Live through him*, 1 John 4. 9.

For God who did decree in his eternal purpoſe to make the World and Mankind in it, and did foreſee how the firſt Man by Sin or the Abuſe of his Liberty and Free-will, would involve both himſelf and all his Poſterity in the Curſe of Death; did alſo decree *before the World was in Being*, to redeem them from this Curſe by a ſecond *Adam*, whom he would raiſe up in a miraculous manner out of *David's* Poſterity, *and not by any Act of his own immediate Power*. Which Truth Men could never attain to the Knowledge of by the uſe of their beſt Reaſon, but depends upon the Revelations made by the Spirit of God, as many other Truths do; which the natural Man cannot attain to by human Underſtanding only.

Now the Teſtimonies of Scripture concerning the Reſurrection of the Dead to another State of Life, are

are thoſe in the firſt Place, which are Recorded in the Writings of the Old Teſtament; and I will begin with the Words of the Angel which appear'd unto *Moſes* in God's ſtead, and took upon him the Title of God, ſaying, *I am the God of thy Fathers, the God of* Abraham, *and the God of* Iſaac, *and the God of* Jacob, Exod. 3. 6. Which Words being ſpoken after theſe three holy Men were Dead, do ſhew as Chriſt our Saviour does himſelf declare, *That the Dead are* to be *raiſed*, ſince *he is not the God of the Dead but of the Living, for all Live to him*, Luke 20. 37, 38. Tho' Dead to this preſent World, becauſe to an eternal Being all things are preſent, there being nothing either paſt or future to God, tho' it be ſo to us; and therefore *he calls Things that are not, as if they were*, Rom. 4. 17. Becauſe to him they are, as if they were already in being; and by conſequence thoſe that ſhall live again, are accounted of by him as if they did live always for their continuance in the Grave, is a time that bears no proportion to his eternal Duration; and therefore is as nothing to him. To ſay therefore of dead Men, That *he is their God*, denotes, that they ſhall riſe again from the Dead, for Abraham *is Dead.* Joh. 8. 52. And God *is not the God of the Dead but of the Living. Abraham* therefore and thoſe other dead Men muſt live again, *it being ſhewed* by theſe Words, *That the Dead are* to be *raiſed.*

The next Teſtimonies which mention a Reſurrection from the Dead, are thoſe ſpoken by the Prophet *Iſaiah*; ſaying, *Thy dead Men ſhall live together, with my dead Body ſhall they Ariſe: Awake and Sing, all ye that dwell in the Duſt.*----Iſa. 26. 19. And to the ſame purpoſe the Prophet *Ezekiel* ſpeaks, in order to comfort the righteous *Iſraelites*, ſaying in the Name of God, whoſe Words he then ſpake,

Be-

Behold! O my People, I will open your Graves and cauſe you to come up out of your Graves, and bring you into the Land of Iſrael; *and ye ſhall know that I am the Lord when I have opened your Graves, O my People, and brought you up out of your Graves*, Ezek. 37. 12, 13. And the ſame Doctrin is alſo taught by the Prophet *Daniel*; for ſpeaking of thoſe *who ſlept in the Duſt of the Earth*, he ſays, That they *ſhall awake ſome to everlaſting Life, and ſome to everlaſting Shame and Contempt*, Dan. 12. 2. In which Propheſies the *Jews* were taught, that the Dead ſhall be raiſed to a new Life, in which good Men ſhould be Happy for ever, and the Wicked ſuffer everlaſting Puniſhment.

And that they had ſuch a Faith in a future State, is evident from thoſe forms of Speech which are recorded to be uttered by them: Thus for inſtance, when Men Die they are ſaid to Sleep with their Fathers. This is ſaid of *David*, *King* 2. 10. And of *Solomon*, 1 *King* 11. 43. And of *Abiam* and *Aſa*, 1 *King* 15. 8, 24. Which ſhews that they did not eſteem Death to be an utter Ceſſation of Life for ever; but that their *reſt in the Duſt*, as *Job* expreſſes it (*Job* 17. 16.) ſhould be for a time only, and that this continuance in the State of the Dead ſhould be but as a Sleep, out of which Men do awake again after they have continued for a while in it. 'Tis alſo ſaid that *the Righteous hath hope in his Death*, Pro. 14. 32. Which plainly denotes, That good Men had ſtill a Proſpect of ſome Happineſs to come afterwards in another State of Life; and therefore 'tis ſaid, That *all theſe Died in the Faith, not having received the Promiſes*, Heb. 11. 13. That is, they believed that after Death, the Promiſes of God ſhould be made good to them.

And

And indeed without the belief of a future State of Rewards and Puniſhments, it would have been impoſſible for the righteous *Jews* to have endured their Sufferings with Patience as they did; for one who very well knew their State, tells us, That many of them *had Trial of cruel Mockings and Scourgings; Yea, moreover of Bonds and Impriſonments, they were Stoned, they were Sawn in ſunder, were Tempted, were Slain with the Sword, they wandered about in Sheep-ſkins and Goat-ſkins, being deſtitute, Afflicted, Tormented,* Heb. 11. 36, 37. Now for Men thus ſubjected to ſuch great Miſeries, and yet to live ſuch Lives as made them to be Perſons *of whom the World was not worthy,* v. 38. is a clear Proof that they had ſome aſſurance of a Reward which did not depend on temporal Happineſs: For what temporal Happineſs could Men expect in ſuffering ſuch Miſeries even unto Death, in order to be Virtuous? For their Goodneſs did but expoſe them the more to the Malice of thoſe who had Power over them, to Plague and Torment them. No leſs therefore than a well-grounded Aſſurance, that God would recompence them in another Life, for their unfeigned Love and ſtedfaſt Obedience, could enable them to live Righteouſly in ſuch evil Circumſtances; and that this was the main thing is plainly affirmed by the Author to the *Hebrews*, who tells us, That *they accepted not of Deliverance, that they might obtain a better Reſurrection,* Heb. 11. 35. So that 'tis plain, That the hopes of being raiſed up from the Dead, at laſt to enjoy eternal Bleſſings *in the preſence of God, wherein is fulneſs of Joy, and at whoſe right Hand are Pleaſures for ever more,* Pſa. 16. 11. Was the main thing that ſupported them in the way of their Duty.

From

From the conſideration then of what hath before been mentioned, it will be evident to every Man, *who uſes his Reaſon aright*; that the *Jews* did believe that the Dead ſhould awake out of their mortal Sleep and live a ſecond time. But this truth is yet made much more clear and plain by the Goſpel Doctrin, wherein *Life and Immortality is* ſaid to be *brought to light*, 2 Tim. 1. 10. Becauſe there is made therein a diſcovery of ſome Truths relating to the Reſurrection of the Dead, which before were not made known to the World; of which this is one main particular, That God will do this wonderful Work by Jeſus Chriſt, who is made a *quickening Spirit*, 1 Cor. 15. 45. God having beſtowed on him an Ability when he anointed him *with the Holy Ghoſt and with Power*, Act. 10. 38. To give a new Life to every dead Man, as he did to *Lazarus* when he called to him, and ſaid, Lazarus *come forth*, John 11. 43. Which Truth was not diſcovered before to any People, but depends purely upon the Knowledge of the Goſpel Revelations.

And herein it is expreſly ſaid by Jeſus Chriſt, *Who knew no Sin, neither was Guile found in his Mouth*, 1 Pet. 2. 22. That *as the Father hath Life in himſelf, ſo hath he given the Son to have Life in himſelf; and hath given him Authority alſo to Execute Judgment, becauſe he is the Son of Man. Marvel not at this*, ſays he, *For the Hour cometh in the which all that are in their Graves ſhall hear his Voice, and ſhall come forth; they that have done Good to the Reſurrection of Life, and they that have done Evil to the Reſurrection of Damnation*, John 5. 26, 27. And after the Reſurrection, as he ſays, the Judgment muſt follow, wherein Chriſt will Sentence both the Righteous and the Wicked, to ſuch a State as will be ſuitable

able to their Works; and when this is done, *Theſe*, that is, the Wicked, *ſhall go away into Everlaſting Puniſhment, but the Righteous into Life Eternal*, Mat. 25. 46. So that it is taught moſt plainly by the Doctrin which Chriſt himſelf did preach with his own Mouth, That as *he is the Reſurrection and the Life*, as he ſtyles himſelf, ſo upon his ſpeaking the Word the Dead ſhall ariſe and come forth out of their Graves, the Good to Eternal Happineſs, and the Wicked to Everlaſting Miſery.

And that God will raiſe the Dead to another Life by Jeſus Chriſt, to whom *all Power* needful to accompliſh ſo great a Work *is given both in Heaven and in Earth*, Mat. 28. 18. is declared alſo by St. *Paul* in theſe Words, *He who raiſed up the Lord Jeſus, will raiſe up us alſo by Jeſus*, 2 Cor. 4. 14. And again, *As by Man*, ſays he, *came Death, ſo by Man came alſo the Reſurrection of the Dead; for as in* Adam *all die, even ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive*, 1 Cor. 15. 21, 22. He is ſaid alſo *to preach Jeſus and the Reſurerction* to the *Athenians*, *Acts* 17. 18. And this he did alſo at *Jeruſalem, Teſtifying to the* Jews, *that he had Hope towards God*; which they themſelves alſo allow, *That there ſhall be a Reſurrection both of the Juſt and Unjuſt*. Acts 24. 15. Moreover the other Apoſtles did preach the ſame Doctrin, as appears from this, that the *Sadducees* and ſome others, who were deluded by the Devil ſo far as to deny this Doctrin, were *grieved, becauſe they taught the People, and preached through Jeſus Chriſt the Reſurrection of the Dead*, Acts 4. 2. This Truth therefore is moſt plainly aſſerted in the Goſpel Doctrin, and is that wherein the great Apoſtle did place his chief Encouragement; for he profeſſes to have no hope of any Reward without it; for all his contending with thoſe who oppoſed the Goſpel,

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If after the manner of Men, ſays he, *I have fought with Beaſts at* Epheſus, *what advantageth it me if the Dead riſe not ?* 1 Cor. 15. 32. But he was certain ſuch a Day would come; and therefore he ſays of himſelf, *I have fought a good Fight, I have finiſh'd my Courſe, I have kept the Faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteouſneſs, which the Lord the righteous Judge ſhall give me at that Day*, 2 Tim. 4. 8. In all which he treads exactly in the Footſteps of our Saviour's Doctrin, who ſays of thoſe who do good, That *they ſhall be recompenced at the Reſurrection of the Juſt*, Luke 14. 14.

There are a great Number of other Paſſages in the new Teſtament, that either directly or by neceſſary Conſequence do prove, that all Mankind who die ſhall live again, *Of which Number are all thoſe wherein Eternal Life is promiſed to good Men, and Everlaſting Puniſhments threatned to the Wicked.* But I ſhall not mention them in particular at the preſent, becauſe thoſe which have already been ſet down are ſo full and ſo plain, that there is no need of others to prove to any truly ingenuous and reaſonable Perſon, that God will raiſe the Dead by Jeſus Chriſt, *That when Chriſt, who is our Life, ſhall appear*, the Righteous may *appear alſo with him in Glory*, Col 3. 4. And the Wicked receive that juſt Doom of *Depart from me ye Curſed into Everlaſting Fire*, Mat. 25. 41.

All that I will add on this Subject, ſhall be ſome few Texts in which the Order is ſhewed, wherein God will raiſe the Dead by the Hand of Jeſus Chriſt. Now we are expreſly told in Scripture, that as Jeſus our Lord *ſhall appear the ſecond time* without Sin *unto Salvation*, Heb. 9. 28. So he ſhall then *deſcend from Heaven with the Voice of the Arch-Angel*

Angel and with the Trump of God, and the Dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe firſt, 1 Theſ. 4. 16. For *every Man ſhall riſe in his own Order, Chriſt the firſt Fruits, and afterwards they that are Chriſt's at his Coming*, 1 Cor. 15. 23. It being evident, that all thoſe *who ſleep in Jeſus will God bring with him*, 1 Theſ. 4. 14. And not only them, but all others alſo, who have died in the ſaving Belief and Practice of true Religion in all Countries: For *God is no Reſpecter of Perſons; but in every Nation, he that feareth him and worketh Righteouſneſs, is accepted with him*, Acts 10. 35. And ſhall be made Partakers of the Bleſſings of the Kingdom of his dear Son, *to Live and Reign with him a thouſand Years*, Rev. 20. 4. *on the Earth*, Rev. 5. 10. which then ſhall be new created or changed into a better State; *For, according to God's Promiſe, we look for a new Heaven and a new Earth, wherein dwelleth Righteouſneſs*, 2 Pet. 3. 13. Which Reſurrection of the Faithful to Reign with Chriſt, *is the firſt Reſurrection:* But the reſt of the Dead, *to wit*, the Wicked, *lived not again, till the thouſand Years were finiſh'd*, as St *John* ſays, Rev. 20. 5. So that 'tis evident from theſe Scripture Paſſages, that there ſhall be about a thouſand Years diſtance between the Reſurrection of good and bad Men. And when the Wicked are raiſed, then God will judge all Mankind by Jeſus Chriſt, even as he did raiſe them up by him; For *he hath appointed a Day in the which he will judge the World in Righteouſneſs by that Man whom he hath ordained*, Acts 17. 31.

And now, that the Scripture Teſtimonies herein produced, to prove that there will be another State of Life to all Mankind after Death, are ſuch as may be rely'd upon moſt ſafely, *we have the greateſt Reaſon to conclude*, becauſe the Books wherein they are found, do appear to have upon them theſe Marks

and

and Tokens of a Divine Authority, which no other account of Religion can pretend to, as is evident from the moſt tranſcendent Purity, and full extent of the Precepts contained therein : For as there are found in theſe Writings ſuch general Laws as are agreeable to all Ages and all Nations, and would make every individual Perſon in the World as happy as in reaſon he could deſire to be in this preſent State, were theſe Laws univerſally obeyed by all ; ſo they are the moſt Holy, and require of us an exact Purity in the Mind, as well as a good and harmleſs Practice, there being nothing required in any Part thereof, *which is rightly underſtood*, that is plainly unreaſonable in its ſelf, or that favours any Action which is evil or truly hurtful to any of the honeſt and ſober part of Mankind, or that does any ways tend to leſſen the Honour of the one true God our Father.

Which being well conſidered is the moſt ſure and certain Evidence that can be deſired to prove thoſe Writings to be of Divine Authority, or Dictated to the Pen-men thereof by the Spirit of God ; for no meer human Underſtanding, *in ſuch a State as this of ours is, wherein is found ſo much Weakneſs of Underſtanding, and ſo much Error in the Judgments of Men*, could produce a rule of Life ſo truly good for all Mankind, and that does ſo fully comprehend whatever is neceſſary to make human Beings moſt eaſie and bleſſed, there being found in all other accounts of Religion, drawn up by thoſe who had no Guide, but that of natural Reaſon, *which is much corrupted by the Sins of Men*, ſuch Precepts as are oppoſite to what we by the light of Nature may know to be our Duty, commanding ſome things plainly contrary to what the Law and Light of Nature teaches, or elſe forbidding others, which are abſolutely

lutely neceſſary to the true Good and Well-being of all Mankind, none of which Defects are to be found in any of the general and plain Laws contained in the Holy Scripture, which is an undoubted Evidence, that the Original or Chief Author of theſe Laws could be no other but God, who did inſpire the Pen-men thereof to commit them to Writing for the Benefit of after Ages; for in many Particulars they would have erred as groſly as other Writers have done, had they not been guided by one that was moſt Wiſe, and could not err. It is reaſonable therefore in the higheſt Senſe to depend on the Truth contained in theſe Divine Records, concerning the Doctrin of a Reſurrection from the Dead, and the endleſs Life of the World to come; ſince 'tis a Doctrin contained in thoſe Writings which do appear to be the moſt Divine and Holy.

And that we may underſtand the Words aright, wherein this Doctrin is contained, *to wit*, Litterally, and not Metaphorically or Figuratively, is evident, from an Example of the Reſurrection which we have in the Perſon of Chriſt, by whoſe Reſurrection we are ſaid *to be begotten again into a lively Hope* of our own Reſurrection. 1 *Pet.* 1 3. *to wit.* That the ſame Subſtance of every Perſon who dies ſhall be again reſtored to Life; for as Chriſt is ſaid *to be the firſt Fruits of them that Slept*, 1 Cor. 15. 20. ſo 'tis certain, that the Perſon of Chriſt, *Who was raiſed from the Dead by the Glory of the Father*, Rom. 6. 4. was the very ſame whom the *Jews* took, *And by wicked Hands did Crucifie and Slay*, Acts 2. 23. The Wound made by the Spear in his Side, and the Prints of the Nails in his Hands and Feet being viſible after his Reſurrection, by which it was demonſtrated, according to his own Words, *That it was he himſelf*, Luke 24. 39. Now, if the

Reſurrection of our Lord, *Who was the firſt Fruits of them that ſleep*, did conſiſt in this, That the very ſame Subſtance, *which was Crucified through Weakneſs, lived again by the Power of God*, as the Apoſtle expreſſes it, 2 *Cor.* 13. 4. We may then be well aſſured, that the ſame at laſt will be our own State and Caſe; for as it is *with the firſt Fruits*, ſo will it be with the whole Harveſt that follows; which Truth *Job* ſeems to have been ſenſible of in his time; for thus he ſpeaks, *Tho' Worms deſtroy this Body, yet in my Fleſh ſhall I ſee God, whom I ſhall ſee for my ſelf; and mine Eyes ſhall behold, and not another*, Job 19. 26.

And as we may be well aſſured of the Truth of the Doctrin of a future State, from the Marks which do demonſtrate thoſe Writings to be of Divine Authority, which do declare, *That the Dead ſhall riſe again*, and from the true Notion of a Reſurrection ſo viſible in the Reſurrection of our Bleſſed Saviour; ſo the agreeableneſs of this Doctrin with ſelf-evident Truths, or its not contradicting any certain Principal of reaſon, is a plain Evidence of the Truth of it; for if it were a Falſhood, it would contradict ſome natural Truth, as all Errors conſtantly do, by which they are chiefly known to be Errors, by thoſe *who believe not every Spirit, but try the Spirits, whether they are of God*, 1 Jo. 4. 1. For Men can no ways judge of the Truth of Doctrins, but by their being agreeable or diſagreeable to the Law and Light of Nature, all Notions being plainly falſe, which are contrary to any firſt or ſelf-evident Principle. *Thus for Inſtance*, to aſſert, that in the higheſt or moſt proper Senſe there are many Gods, is erronious and falſe, becauſe 'tis oppoſite to that ſelf-evident Principle, that in this Senſe none can be God but the higheſt of all Beings, and

that

that he can be but one; but there is no ſuch Contradiction *in the Doctrin of the Reſurrection from the Dead* to any of the Principles of true Reaſon, ſince as before was ſhewed the Conſideration of the tranſcendent Wiſdom, and Goodneſs and Juſtice of God, the general Belief of all truly good Men, and the Fears and Terrors of the Wicked, eſpecially upon a Death-Bed, do make it very probable, that there will be another Life to all Mankind; ſo that the Principles of Scripture and Reaſon in this matter do exactly agree as to a future State.

And there is the ſame Concurrence between Scripture and Reaſon in the caſe of the Reſurrection: For tho' ſome doubt of it, becauſe they cannot conceive how 'tis poſſible for an Human Perſon, when the Subſtance which did compoſe the ſame is diſſolved into Duſt by Corruption, can be formed again out of that Duſt, in order to be made to live a ſecond time. And the Difficulty ſeems ſtill to be the greater, *they ſay*, when Men are devoured either in whole or in part, by ſome ravenous Beaſt, Fowl or Fiſh, and is by the digeſtive Faculty thereof changed into the Subſtance of its ſelf.

Now in theſe Caſes there is no direct Oppoſition in the Doctrin of a Reſurrection to any of the Principles of natural Light, *tho' it be above Reaſon to underſtand how it can be effected*: For 'tis very reaſonable to conceive, that God can cauſe this to be done, when he hath ſaid ſo plainly, that it ſhall be done; for with him we know *all things are poſſible*, Mat. 29. 26. *tho' they might ſeem impoſſible with us*. This is certain, that he who hath ſaid, *Is there any thing too hard for me?* Jer. 32. 27. hath already done things which to us are altogether as unconceivable as the Reſurrection of the Dead may ſeem to be.

For he hath created the World in general, which does conſiſt of Sun and Moon, and Stars innumerable, the vaſtneſs of whoſe Bodies are beyond our Comprehenſion; and the Light and Splendor of the greateſt part is of a Nature altogether unconceiveable to Human Underſtanding. *He hath made the Earth alſo* on which we tread, and all the Creatures which dwell thereon, whereof ſome are of a vaſt Bulk, and others ſo exceeding ſmall, that all our Reaſon cannot conceive how exquiſite and curious their Frame and Structure is, or how 'twas poſſible to ennable ſuch ſmall Creatures to move and act as they do. Now 'tis reaſonable to believe, that the ſame God who hath already done Works ſo far above the reach of our Underſtanding to conceive how they at firſt were made, can likewiſe raiſe a dead Man, *if he pleaſes*, to a new Life.

For tho' the Subſtance of an Human Being is reduc'd by Corruption into Duſt, or is by Fire or any other way divided into the ſmalleſt Parts imaginable, and is afterward ſcattered about far and wide upon the Face of the Earth, or ſhould be mingled with the Duſt into which the Subſtance of any other Human Being is diſſolved, yet God, *whoſe Underſtanding is infinite*, Pſal. 147. 5. does know with the moſt perfect and certain Knowledge where each Particle of Duſt that does belong to every individual Being of Mankind is depoſited, and cannot only diſtinguiſh them from each other, however intermix'd, but by an Act of his Divine Power can beſtow upon each Atome, or Particle of Duſt, ſuch a mutually attractive Power, that at the Word of Chriſt, or upon his willing the thing to be done, they ſhall all naturally move and come together, each into its own Place, and thereby form the ſame Figure or Shape which the Human Subſtance did appear in before

before Death, even as *each Bone is ſaid to come together to his Bone*, in that Repreſentation of the Reſurrection preſented in Viſion to the Prophet *Ezekiel*, in *Ezek.* 3. For as a curious Clock or Watch, when taken to pieces and its Parts are confuſedly mingled, when ſet together again by the Artiſt that made it, *Who knows to what Place each Part does belong?* will be the ſame, or appear in the ſame Figure, and perform the ſame which it did formerly; even ſo when each Part belonging to an Human Being, however it hath been divided or ſubdivided, ſhall again be ſet together by the Power of God, it will become the ſame Perſon that it was before it died, as to Shape or Figure, and have the ſame Senſations and Faculties, when *the Spirit of Life from God*, as 'tis expreſs'd, *Rev.* 11. 11. hath entred into it again, and it becomes a living Soul a ſecond time.

Which Work to a conſidering Man will appear to be more eaſie for God to do, than it was for him to make the firſt Man *out of the Duſt of the Ground*, as he did *Gen.* 2. 7. and did afterwards make him a living Soul by Breathing into his Noſtrils the Breath of Life; *by which the human Subſtance ſo Framed and Enlivened, became capable of Thinking and Acting rationally.* For this was to make a Man out of that earthy Subſtance, which never had been a Man before; but to raiſe a Man from the Dead, is but to reunite again the ſeveral Parts of which he was before compoſed: which to human Reaſon cannot but ſeem very eaſie for an Omnipotent or Almighty Power to perform.

And as to that greater Difficulty which ſome do conceive for a Man to be raiſed from the Dead, who in whole or in part hath been Eaten by ſome other Creature, whether Beaſt, Bird or Fiſh; which by

its digeſtive Faculty, *as they think*, does change the Subſtance of the Perſon ſo Eaten, into their own Subſtance. This proceeds only from their Miſtake concerning the Matter that nouriſhes animal Bodies, which Nouriſhment, tho' it may be extracted from or out of other animal Bodies, yet is not any part of the Body itſelf.

The ſolid Subſtance neceſſary to compoſe or make up the Frame or Body of a Man, is that of which *his Bones, Sinews, Muſcles, Veins*, and ſuch like do conſiſt; as likewiſe *the Brains and other Bowels* within him; which are all framed by the God of Nature ſo full of Channels and ſmall Paſſages, as to be capable of containing in them divers Liquid Subſtances, *ſtiled Blood in ſome Parts, and limphatick Juice in others*; which liquid Subſtance is derived from the Liquids contained in the ſubſtance of the Food the Perſon eats; and ſerves to ſupply Matter to each neceſſary Part in the time of its growth, till the Perſon hath attained to his full Stature: *The Bones and Sinews and all other Parts growing bigger, by an addition of Matter derived from this liquid Nutrition*; which alſo ſerves after the full Growth of the Perſon, to moiſten the Parts and keep thoſe plump who need it, that they may perform their ſeveral Motions and Actions duly, which they could not do ſhould they become dry for want of a continual Supply,* by dayly Food to keep the Parts moiſt and full as the old Matter is ſpent, either in augmenting the ſolid Parts in Perſons not full grown, or by paſſing out at the Pores of the Skin, *either in Sweat or inſenſible Tranſpiration.* Now this liquid Juice is no real part of the human Frame, *tho' contained in it:* For if for want of Food to ſupply this Juice continually as it dries away, or paſſes out by the ſmall Channels through the Pores of the Skin;

Skin; the Body becomes lean, and is ſo far waſted as to be deprived thereby of Life. *Yet ſtill there will remain the real Subſtance of all the ſolid Parts, neceſſary to compoſe the Perſon or Body of a Man*; which is an evident Proof that this liquid Subſtance is not any real part of the human Frame, tho' it be neceſſary to the perſervation of its Life and Strength.

And 'tis by this liquid Juice alone that any Creature is Nouriſhed that Eats human Fleſh, for all that the digeſtive Faculty of the Eater does to the real Subſtance of any of the neceſſary or ſolid Parts of a Man ſo Eaten, is to divide the neceſſary Parts in ſunder, or reduce the ſame into a pap-like Subſtance, that the Veſſels or Parts of the Eater fitted to draw Nouriſhment to it ſelf *from the Food it eats*, may attract or ſuck out from thence the liquid Juice which was contained in its Pipes and Channels; after which all the real Subſtance of the neceſſary or ſolid Parts ſo reduced to a Pap, paſſes out again from the Belly of the Eater, *in that which vulgarly is called Dung or Excrement*; which in a ſhort time becomes the very ſame Earth or Duſt which it would have done had it been Buried in a Grave, or Burnt to Aſhes; *and by conſequence*, out of this Duſt or Earth the ſame Man or Woman may be as eaſily re-made or formed anew, as the Perſon could have been if the human Subſtance had not been ſo Eaten.

From what then hath been ſaid upon the whole Matter, no wiſe Man can ſee any reaſon *to think it a thing incredible that God ſhould raiſe the Dead*, Acts 26. 8. tho' it ſhould be never ſo much above the reach of a human Underſtanding, to know the particular manner of God's doing ſo wonderful a Work

by Jeſus Chriſt, in whom he dwells and acts according to that Saying of Chriſt, *The Father which dwelleth in me, he doth the Works*, John 14. 10. There being the greateſt Reaſon to believe it poſſible for God *to raiſe the Dead uncorruptable*, as St. *Paul* expreſſes it, 1 *Cor.* 15. 14 becauſe he hath already done Works which are altogether as unconceivable to us as this is

I ſhould now conclude this Diſcourſe about the certain Aſſurance which we may have *concerning a future State*; but I think it will be neceſſary to ſay ſomething relating *to the differences found among thoſe who are called Chriſtians*, about the beginning of this future Life of Rewards and Puniſhments; which difference ſome do urge as an Argument to prove, this Doctrin not to be ſo certain as the maintainers of it do aſſert. Now theſe Differences are thoſe that follow.

One part of Chriſtians do believe, That the Perſon or real Eſſence of every human Being, is not a viſible and mortal Subſtance, but an inviſible and immortal Spirit, not Begotten between a Man and a Woman, but Created by God himſelf, and put into an human or viſible Subſtance *ſo Begotten*, to act in it till a ſeparation by Death ſhall be made again between them; at which time let Death happen when it will, *this Spirit returns to God that gave it*; and is immediately Judged and has Sentence paſt upon it to be Rewarded with Happineſs in Heaven, or Puniſh'd in Hell, as its Deeds in this World have been either Righteous or Wicked: But that the Rewards and Puniſhments of that State will not be ſo full, as they ſhall afterwards be, the compleat Felicity or Miſery of every one who is Good or Bad, being defer'd to the Time of the Reſurrection, for then

then the Spirit or Soul ſhall again return from Heaven or Hell wherein it before was plac'd, and revive a ſecond time the Body in which it did act before Death, *which then will be made anew out of its old Matter.* After which every Man and Woman thus raiſed, ſhall be judged a ſecond time in the general Judgment by Jeſus Chriſt, *who is appointed by God to Reward or Puniſh every one as his Work ſhall be,* and according as their Actions ſhall then be found to deſerve Correction, or to be worthy of Bleſſedneſs, *ſo ſhall their future State and Condition be forever:* That is to ſay, perfectly Miſerable or perfectly Happy; in which Notion, tho' a Reſurrection from the Dead is aſſerted, yet 'tis alſo affirmed, that the future State of Rewards and Puniſhments ſhall in ſome degree begin before that time, to wit, the next Moment after Death.

But this Doctrin the other part diſlike; for they ſay it contradicts the moſt Self-evident-principles which do aſſure us, That Mankind are viſible Beings, and may be felt by others of the ſame kind, and that they are all Mortal and do at laſt undergo the Fate of Death: And they ſay beſides, That the Notion of two Judgments muſt be falſe, becauſe *the Father Judgeth no Man, but hath committed all Judgment to his Son,* John 5. 22. And the Son will not Judge any Man till the end of the World, when he ſhall appear the ſecond time.

Now the Belief of theſe Men is this, That all human Beings are derived from *Adam,* the firſt Man who had this Sentence paſt upon him for his Sin, that as he was Duſt, ſo *he ſhould turn to Duſt again,* Gen. 3. 19. And therefore other Men being the ſame with him as to Nature, they muſt be Mortal and Die like him; and that after this they ſhall remain

main for a time in a State of unactive Silence and Inſenſibility, or be uncapable of knowing or feeling either Happineſs or Miſery, according to that ſaying, *The Dead know not any thing---There is no Work, nor Knowledge, nor Device in the Grave, whither thou goeſt*, Eccl. 9. 5, 10. And this State ſhall continue *till the times of the reſtitution of all Things*, Acts 3. 21. Which being come, *all that are in the Graves ſhall hear the Voice of Chriſt, and ſhall come forth*, John 5. 28. Every one in his own order, firſt they that are Chriſt's, and then the Wicked, and when all are raiſed up, they ſhall appear before his Judgment-Seat; God having appointed *a Day, in the which he will Judge the World in Righteouſneſs, by that Man whom he hath ordained*, Acts 17. 37. And when this Judgment is ended, and the Sentence is pronounc'd of Abſolution on the Righteous, and of Condemnation on the Wicked, *theſe ſhall go away into everlaſting Puniſhment, but the Righteous into Life Eternal*, Mat 25. 46. Now in this laſt Notion it is aſſerted, That the future Life or State will not begin, neither ſhall the Righteous be Rewarded or the Wicked Puniſhed, till they are raiſed up again from the Grave; wherein, as *Job* ſays. they *reſt together*, Job 3. 18. till *the Spirit of Life from God*, Rev. 11. 11. ſhall make them live a ſecond time.

Now I will not undertake at this time to make it evident, which of theſe two Opinions concerning the beginning of the future State is trueſt. The only thing which I ſhall now conſider in this Matter, is the Fancy of ſome who think *that theſe Differences are a ſufficient proof, That the Doctrin of a future State is not ſo plainly contained in Scripture as is pretended:* For ſay they, if this Doctrin was ſo plainly revealed therein, there could not be ſuch differences about it among thoſe who make the Scriptures their

chief

chief Rule of Faith; *for in all Truths plainly revealed, 'tis reaſonable to expect that they ſhould agree.*

To which I anſwer, That all Chriſtians do agree exactly in this, *That after Death there will be an other Life to all Mankind.* For tho' there is ſome difference among them as to the time of its beginning, *which is but a Circumſtance*, yet in acknowledging a Reſurrection *which both Parties do*, they are one, or do agree in the main Subſtance of this Doctrin. For they who believe *that* after Death *there will be a Reſurrection both of the Juſt and Unjuſt*, Acts 24. 5. are Men who believe what is ſufficient to anſwer all that is neceſſary in Faith, which is by the fear of future Puniſhments, which they believe, and the hopes of everlaſting Happineſs in an other State, to engage Mankind *to deny Ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts, and to live Soberly, Righteouſly, and Godly in this preſent World*, Tit. 2. 12. For that which is moſt proper to effect this, is not ſo much Men's believing when a future State will begin, as that there certainly will be ſuch a State at laſt; in which the Righteous ſhall enjoy endleſs Felicity, and Sinners endure endleſs Puniſhments. So that this difference is no proof that Chriſtians do not agree in the main Subſtance of this Doctrin.

And indeed when the Opinion of both Parties are rightly conſidered, it will appear to be the ſame thing in reſpect to the Senſations and Apprehenſions of Mankind: For this State will ſeem to all Mankind to begin immediately after Death, *tho' in reality it ſhould not do ſo*; for if it ſhould be true that thoſe are moſt in the right who do ſuppoſe the State of all Mankind, between their Death and Reſurrection, will during the time it laſts, be a State of perfect Inſenſibility: Yet it is very plain, that Death then

then will be no more to any one than the ſound Sleep of one Night. So ſhort will the time ſeem to be of reſting in the Duſt, tho' it ſhould have been ſome thouſand of Years; for the time which Men are not ſenſible of will be as no time to them; ſo that it will ſeem to both Parties when they ſhall be wakened *by the Sound of the laſt Trumpet*, as if they had dropt into a deep Sleep but juſt before: For this muſt be the caſe, if *the Dead know not any thing* between Death and the Reſurrection; and by conſequence that when St. *Paul* ſaid, That he did deſire *to be diſſolved and to be with Chriſt*, he Spoke true enough, *tho' he had not believed that this would certainly be the next Moment after Death*; becauſe if the State between Death and the Reſurrection were like an inſenſible Sleep, the next appearance of Things that he would have been ſenſible of, muſt have been that of the ſecond appearance of Jeſus Chriſt; for no knowledge of any other matter would have come between that and Death.

I will only add this, That if what hath now been ſaid was but conſidered ſeriouſly, it would be enough to ſilence the uncharitable Cenſures and ſpiteful Clamours of many, who condemn them as no good Chriſtians, who think that the future State will begin immediately after Death; *For if this ſhould be a plain Miſtake*, yet ſince they firmly believe the Doctrin of the Reſurrection of the Dead, and the Life of the World to come, wherein the Righteous ſhall be happy for ever, and the Wicked be plunged into endleſs Miſery; They believe what is ſufficient to make Men live good Lives, who have not ſinned away all Ingenuity and common Grace. And in this they do alſo profeſs all that is required concerning this matter in the Apoſtles Creed, which is the moſt Primitive Confeſſion of Faith that at preſent

ſent is extant, which is enough in reaſon to engage every good Man to eſteem them as Members of the myſtical Body of Chriſt, if they alſo *follow after Peace with all Men and Holineſs, without which no Man ſhall ſee the Lord*, Heb. 12. 14. For a good Life from a firm Belief of a future State of Rewards and Puniſhments, will make Men fit for the pardoning Grace and Mercy of God, tho they ſhould err in ſome Points of meer Speculation; for otherwiſe no Man living could be ſaved, becauſe none are infallible in all they believe.

Some alledge, that the Cauſe of their ſo zealouſly oppoſing and cenſuring theſe Men, is the Encouragement which they think will be given to the wicked to go on in their Sins, and die without Repentance, when they know their Puniſhment will be put off till the Day of Judgment, becauſe ſay they, when Sentence is not ſpeedily executed, *the Hearts of the Children of Men will be fully ſet in them to do evil*, Eccl. 8. 11.

To which I anſwer, That to a Man who uſes his Reaſon aright, the knowing that Puniſhment ſhall not be executed upon him for Treaſon or Murder, till the time come which the Law hath appointed for his Tryal and Condemnation cannot be ſaid to encourage him to commit ſuch horrid Crimes, becauſe the Puniſhment, when it comes, will not be the leſs Fatal for this Delay; even ſo neither can a Man's believing he ſhall not be puniſhed for his Sins till the Reſurrection be any kind of Encouragement to him to do wickedly, becauſe the Puniſhment will come at laſt, and when once begun muſt be endured for ever; for no manner of Compariſon can be made between everlaſting Torments and that ſhort time in which Men are permitted to commit Sin;

Sin; and therefore no Man who is right in his Wits will think this delay of Puniſhment ſufficient to balance the Miſeries which he muſt afterwards endure.

It is now evident as I humbly conceive by what hath before been ſaid, That all Mankind *by a Reſurrection from the Dead* will be reſtored to another Life after Death; for the Proofs herein produced to make this Doctrin clear and plain to all Capacities, are as full and as concluding as a Truth can admit of, which is of a Nature altogether future, and cannot be known any other way, *till Men actually enjoy the Happineſs of ſuch a State, or feel its Miſery*, it being capable of no other Demoſtration but what ariſes from rational Arguments, and from the Teſtimonies collected from Holy Scripture, the plaineſt of which are here expoſed to publick View in ſuch a brief and ſhort Method, as will make them more eaſie to be remembred, and ſo more advantageous to Mankind; for thoſe Truths will perſuade Men moſt effectually to live good Lives, which they do moſt plainly underſtand, and do moſt conſtantly bear in Mind.

And the Reaſon why I have choſen to inſiſt upon the Doctrin of *the Reſurrection* to prove a future State rather than on that of the Immortality of Human Beings *held by one part of Chriſtians*, is this, That they all agree in believing a Reſurrection of the Dead: But in the other Particular they do not accord, there being many, *as before has been ſhew'd*, who look upon Mankind to be Beings that are become Mortal, like unto Beaſts, by means of the firſt Sin of *Adam*; for they alledge Scripture to prove, That *as the one Dieth, ſo dieth the other—— All go to one Place, All are of the Duſt, and All turn*

to

to Duſt again. Eccl, 3. 19. 20. But they differ from other Animals, they ſay in this, That tho' they are not Immortal Souls now, yet they ſhall be ſo hereafter; *For this Corruptible muſt put on Incorruption, and this Mortal muſt put on Immortality,* 1 Cor. 15. 53. So that in this Particular, as well as in point of a Rationality, capable of attaining to the knowledge of God, and acting as becomes Perſons deſigned for future Happineſs, by the Grace of God the Præeminence of a Man above a Beaſt is manifeſted, becauſe God will not confer ſuch Bleſſings on thoſe Creatures. Now as thoſe *who believe that Mankind ſhall be Immortal Souls after they are raiſed from the Dead, but are not ſo before,* do differ from other Chriſtians in that Particular; therefore I thought it more reaſonable to inſiſt only on the Doctrin of the Reſurrection, which is a Truth wherein both Parties do generally agree; for in ſo doing I ſhall not give cauſe to wrangling Capacities, who will have ſomething to except againſt all Arguments, to ſay that we ought to agree among our ſelves, before we go about to perſuade others to believe as we do.

But I am not ſo vain as to think that what has herein been ſaid, will actually convince every one of his Error, *whoſe Life has been ſo very evil,* as to make him deſire that there might be no future State in which Sinners ſhall be puniſh'd; and from deſiring do come at laſt to doubt of, or reſolve not to believe that there will be any ſuch Life. For if our Bleſſed Saviour, who ſpake *as never Man ſpake,* John 7 46. and *did the Works which none other Man did,* to confirm the Truth of his Doctrin, *John* 5. 24 could perſuade ſo few to forſake their Errors, in compariſon to the great Number of others, who ſtill perſiſted in their Ignorance of the Truth, 'tis

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then in vain for me, or any other Man, to expect better Succeſs where Men are not diſpoſed *by due Conſideration and a teachable Mind and Temper* to receive Inſtruction, or embrace thoſe Doctrins, which have greater reaſon on their ſide to prove them poſſible, or worthy of Belief, than does appear againſt them; for where Men have a Prejudice againſt any Doctrin, there the beſt Arguments to perſuade their Aſſent are ineffectual.

But however, this much I have to add, That if any Perſons are ſo unhappy as to doubt of a future State, becauſe it may ſeem to them not to be ſo plainly proved as ſome other Truths can be; *to wit, as plainly as that Four is more than Two, which is Self-evident to every honeſt Mind*; yet I will now demonſtrate beyond all reaſonable Contradiction, that 'tis their wiſeſt and ſafeſt Courſe to believe it, and live ſuch a Life as is ſuitable to ſuch a Doctrin.

For 'tis plain in the firſt place, that their Doubtings, or reſolving to believe that there will be no other Life, is no ſolid or certain Proof that there ſhall be none: *But this is the moſt that theſe Men do pretend to*; for they never yet did produce any reaſonable Arguments againſt a future State, in which Caſe it will follow, that for any thing they certainly know to the contrary, it is as poſſible that there may be a future State, as that there may not be one, it being plain, that they who only doubt, are not aſſured on either ſide; for where Men are fully aſſured which Doctrin is true and which is falſe, they cannot continue any longer to doubt, or to be unſatisfy'd about it, ſince all Doubts muſt ceaſe moſt neceſſarily when Men are once ſatisfy'd on which ſide the Truth lies, and to proceed from doubting to reſolve for that reaſon only not to belive it is but Fool-

Fool-hardineſs, and ought to be abhorr'd by every Man who has common Reaſon and common Senſe.

Now as 'tis the wiſeſt and ſafeſt way to be on the ſureſt Side, ſo the ſureſt Side in this Caſe is to believe, that there will be a future State, and to ſtrive to imitate the Lives of the beſt Men, who do the ſame; becauſe in this Men can run no Hazard, if it ſhould prove after Death to be a Falſhood; for if there be no other Life after Death, Men cannot be in any danger of being puniſhed after Death for the Errors they are guilty of in this World, becauſe if they live no more they will then be as uncapable of feeling Pain as of enjoying Pleaſure; ſo that 'tis evident from what has now been ſaid, that if there will be no other Life after Death, and yet a Man does believe that there will be one, his Caſe can be no worſe after Death, than that Man's ſhall be who diſ-believes it, becauſe there can be no Puniſhment to Torment when Life is at an End for ever.

But on the other Hand, if it ſhall appear after Death, that Men ſhall be raiſed again to a new Life, the Miſery then of not believing the ſame will be very great, ſince by the Wickedneſs and Impenitence which the Diſ-belief of this Doctrin will be the Cauſe of, they will be fitted *not for the happy Society of the Righteous, but* for the Society only of ſuch wicked Men and Devils as in Mind and Temper are like themſelves, which cannot be any other but a State of diſmal Vexation and continual Torment; for where Men have none for their Companions, but malicious and furious Devils, and the whole rake-hell Rabble of bloody and cruel Tyrants, mercileſs Oppreſſors, and all the Villainous,

Unjuſt, Falſhearted, Ill-natur'd and Unclean and Brutiſh-minded People that ever have lived in the World, *from the domineering Prince to the moſt vile and contemptible Beggar*, the mutual Plagues which this curſed Crew will be the Cauſe of one to another, and the uncomfortable Senſe of that Divine Joy and Happineſs, which by their Folly and Madneſs they have loſt for ever, will be a moſt woful Torment, *ſhould not God inflict any of the other Burning Furies of his Wrath upon them*; for nothing but a diſmal State of Trouble and Torment can then be expected in that Place, where there are none but wicked Men and Devils; which Hazard no Man can run who believes the Doctrin of a future State, and is prevail'd upon thereby to live a good Life, ſince he will be fitted *by his Piety and Honeſty, his Purity and Charity* for the Society of all the virtuous and good-natur'd People that ever were born into the World, in whoſe Converſation he will be filled with unſpeakable Delight and Satisfaction, and ſhall alſo be made Partaker of thoſe other Happineſſes for ever, which are to be found in the Heavenly State, which now are altogether unconceivable, becauſe not ſuitable to Human Nature, till it is ſpiritualiz'd and made Immortal.

And as 'tis thus evident beyond all reaſonable Contradiction, that the Belief of a future State, and living *that peaceable and quiet Life in all Godlineſs and Honeſty*, 1 Tim. 2. 2. which ſuch a Faith is proper to work in Men, *is the wiſeſt and ſafeſt Courſe* that can be taken to prevent being miſerable after Death, and to attain to the higheſt Happineſs that we are capable of, in caſe it ſhould be true, that there ſhall be another Life to all Mankind, becauſe as 'tis a Faith and Practice which will certainly make

them

them Happy, if there ſhall be ſuch a Life, and can do them no manner of Damage after Death, if there ſhould be none; *So 'tis plain alſo*, that the Belief of this Doctrin and a Life anſwerable will be no Damage to their true Happineſs in this World, but rather increaſe it and make it more ſecure.

For 'tis evident both to the Reaſon and Experience of every ingenuous or truly wiſe and good Man, that no one *did ever ruin his Health, or Eſtate, or Reputation*, by being moderate in Meat and Drink, and by Chaſtity and Diligence, and avoiding all fooliſh and ſinful Expences, or by being Juſt and Honeſt in his Actions, as others have done by Luxury, and Drunkenneſs, and laſcivious Practices, by Idleneſs, and Pride, and Gaming, and other Extravagancies, or by diſhoneſt Dealing, Falſheartedneſs, cruel Oppreſſion and ſuch like Sins, which do naturally tend to deſtroy our Lives, make us poor and beggarly, or deprive us of the Love and good Eſteem of others.

If the Practice of Goodneſs was but Univerſal, it would make this World a kind of Heaven for Delight and Happineſs; for Sickneſs and Pain would not be ſo common, if Men were but truly moderate in their ſenſual Satisfactions, and did not exceed the reaſonable Neceſſities of Nature in pleaſing any Deſire; nor could they ſuffer any preſent want of outward Comforts, if all Men were Induſtrious and Careful in the Management of their worldly Affairs, Juſt in their Dealings, True to their Word and Promiſe, Meek and Humble in their Deportment, *and did ſtrive by Kindneſs and good Nature to make the Lives of all others as eaſie and*

happy as they could desire in reason that their own Lives should be; for then, as they are well affected to all Men, they would seldom miss of a suitable Return; so then if an entire Obedience to the Will of God were once the governing Principle in all Mankind, a general Happiness would soon flow in upon them, and they would possess all that Felicity which, *in such a Mortal State as this is*, they could in reason desire or expect.

On the other Hand, if every Man in the World were Idle and Lazy, Falshearted, Cruel in his Mind and Temper, Unjust in all his Dealings, Proud and Scornful, a Hater of all Men, given to Lying, to Drunkenness, to filthy Lust and such like base and hateful Crimes, the World would then be a meer Hell for Misery and Confusion; for every Man would continually strive how to ruin and destroy his Fellows, and cheat and cozen all those that he deals with; and Men would so perpetually plague and torment one another with Quarrels and Contentions, *that it would be impossible to live in Safety, or enjoy any other worldly Comfort in Peace and Quiet*. For Men would always be in danger of Robbers and Murderers, proud and insolent Persons, would scorn and contemn them, and all the Miseries which the Wicked could be the Cause of, would be the Portion of every particular Person, because the Plagues would be mutual, were every Man in the World as wicked as Men possibly can be.

It is therefore evident, that the best State of Mankind in this Life *depends upon Virtue, and not upon Vice*; for the true Peace and Happiness of every Man does depend upon the general Innocence and Harmlessness of Mankind, and not upon their common

monVillany and Baſeneſs; for as every Man hates to be cheated of his own proper Right, or to be deceiv'd by them in whom he puts Truſt and Confidence, and is very uneaſie, when he finds himſelf ſcorn'd and contemn'd by others, or abus'd by ill-natur'd Perſons, *ſo others will as much abominate to be treated by him in the ſame manner.* And tho' bad Men do now enjoy a little Comfort, becauſe they live among ſome who are harmleſs, and that have in them a good degree of Juſtice and Faithfulneſs, and are of a peaceable, kind-hearted and helpful Temper of Mind, yet they would ſoon find an Alteration in their Caſe, if there were no Goodneſs in the World, that is to ſay, if every other Man were as baſe and wicked as themſelves, or as Cruel, Unjuſt, Falſhearted and Filthy as the worſt of Men can poſſibly be.

And now from what hath been ſaid it is demonſtrated beyond all rational Contradiction, that how uncertain ſoever the fore-going Proofs of a future State may ſeem to be *to ſome few weak and vitious Minds*, yet the ſafeſt and the wiſeſt Courſe that ſuch Men can take, is, to believe *that there poſſibly may be ſuch a State*, and to live that good Life which is ſuitable to ſuch a Faith, becauſe in ſo doing they can be in no danger of Evil, or run any kind of Hazard, ſince they will not only be on the ſureſt ſide, upon the account of what may be after Death, but they alſo, *by means of their harmleſs and good-natur'd Behaviour*, will make themſelves moſt Bleſſed and worthy of Eſteem in this World, *If the Doctrin of a future State ſhould not be true*; for as Goodneſs is moſt proper to obtain Love from others. ſo 'tis the only thing which is ſuitable to Human Nature, and gives the moſt inward Content and Peace to the

Mind of Man, as appears from this Conſideration, that no one, how high or how low ſoever his Condition was in this World, *did ever yet repent of a virtuous Life upon a Death-Bed*, but did rather exceedingly rejoyce in it at that time; whereas Wickedneſs is ſo contrary to the natural Conſtitution of Human Beings, that it does not only make Men, who do bad things, hateful to all others, *who feel the evil Effects thereof, or are injur'd thereby*: But it makes them in ſome ſort odious to themſelves too; and this occaſions that open Confeſſion of their own Folly, and that Repentance for Sin, which ſo many have made when they come to die, by which they do plainly acknowledge, that they then are ſenſible they had been much wiſer had they lived better Lives, ſince that would have ſecured their main Stake, and freed them from all Danger which was poſſible to have happen'd afterwards.

This then being the Truth of the Caſe, 'tis reaſonable in the higheſt to conclude, *That the moſt honourable and bleſſed State of Mankind*, is that of leading a Religious and Virtuous Life. This was the Opinion of the wiſe King *Solomon*, who well knew all the Happineſs that Vice afforded; for having changed his Mind, after he had lived a vitious Life, in order to ſee the difference between thoſe Joys and the Joys of Goodneſs: He ſays of the one, That 'tis all *Vexation of Spirit*, Eccl. 1. 17. and that *the Righteous is more excellent than his Neighbour*, Prov. 12. 26. for which reaſon *the Fear of the Lord is ſaid to be the beginning of Wiſdom*, Pſalm 111. 10. Becauſe good Men are always moſt happy in themſelves, their Actions being moſt agreeable to the beſt Reaſon of their Minds, and their Conſciences do not accuſe them of being ſo baſe and unworthy,

as to do that to others which they abominate ſhould it be done to themſelves: And they alſo live with the greateſt outward Reputation, *the kind Hearted, Humble, Juſt, Faithful, Sober and Chaſt Man, who is unfeignedly Pious*; being always better Beloved and more Eſteemed of than thoſe *who are Proud, and Ill-Natur'd, given to Oppreſſion, unfaithful in Matters of publick Truſt, Drunkards, Lyars, Lovers of filthy Luſt, and ſuch like*; Theſe being Sins which wiſe Men abhor, and which thoſe Sinners who like theſe Crimes in themſelves, do yet deride and ſcoff at in others; and they are ſuch Sins alſo as do often bring the Actors themſelves to Poverty, and end generally in ſome ſhameful or miſerable Death.

And as to that Life which 'tis moſt reaſonable to believe that Men will live after Death, 'tis certain that Goodneſs will ſecure the Happineſs of it, *becauſe the effect of Righteouſneſs is Quietneſs and Aſſurance for ever*, Iſa. 32. 17. For at the Day of Judgment Chriſt will ſeparate them from Sinners as a Shepherd ſeparates the Sheep from the Goats, ſo that they ſhall be no longer Plagued with their brutiſh, cruel and vexatious Converſation, and they ſhall converſe continually *with the moſt Kind-hearted, Juſt and Noble-minded Perſons*, who reſemble God *in Purity, and Chaſtity, in Mercy and Truth*; who with the like mutual Endearments ſhall ſtrive to make each other Happy: Beſides which they ſhall enjoy the divine Favour of God, *whoſe Love they did prefer before all other Things*; and be joint Heirs with Jeſus Chriſt of the Felicities that he hath obtained, where their Eyes ſhall be delighted for ever with the Glories of Paradice, and where they ſhall be entertained Eternally with the Melody reſulting from the divine Songs of Saints and Angels.

Which being well conſidered, is an Encouragement ſufficient to make Mankind reſolve to live Virtuouſly whatever Hardſhips they may ſuffer here in this Life for their ſo doing *from wicked Men*, or how low ſoever their Condition may be for the Happineſs which does attend on Goodneſs in this World, where the Virtuous are beloved always by all wiſe Men, *when the Vicious are hated*; and the Joy and Glory which will be their Portion after Death, will make them a ſufficient amends *for all the unrighteous Game they have avoided, for all the unlawful Pleaſures they have denied themſelves, and for the Reproach and Scorn which has been caſt upon them by the Ungodly.* For it is a much greater Bleſſedneſs to enjoy a quiet Mind here out of a ſenſe of their care to avoid all baſe Actions, and to partake of the endleſs Felicities of Heaven; than to poſſeſs the moſt innocent Wealth or Pleaſure of this World, which muſt all be parted with for ever when Death comes, which puts an end to all temporal Enjoyments.

Much leſs then is the wicked Honour, or Wealth, or Pleaſure of bad Men to be compared with it; For what is it to get a great Eſtate by Oppreſſion, or crafty Dealing, or by Cheating the Publick? What is it to ſwagger about in a little ſilly Pride and Vanity, to ſtuff ones Guts like Swine with dainty Meat and ſtrong Drink? To be as fond of Luſt as the filthy Sayters of the Wilderneſs: Or to be able to Domineer over others at our Pleaſure: Pay no Debts nor be bound by any other Law but our own Will. Alaſs, all this Happineſs at the longeſt, will laſt but for the little time of this preſent Life; ſince when Death comes it puts an end for ever to all the Power, and Pomp, and Pleaſure of Sinners. For

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in the Grave unrightous Kings and wicked Beggars are alike great, and at the Reſurrection ſhall be deprived alike of the Glory and Happineſs of Heaven.

The good Man therefore in his worſt Circumſtances at preſent, has juſt Cauſe to pity the Folly of the Wicked, and deride their Madneſs; becauſe the Happineſs of the Righteous ſhall begin in order to continue for ever, when the Joy of Sinners, *which can laſt but for a ſhort Seaſon*, ſhall end for ever; *and make them ten thouſand times more Miſerable afterwards*, than 'tis poſſible for any honeſt Man to be at preſent *how afflictive ſoever his Condition may be.* 'Tis highly reaſon therefore and the greateſt point of Wiſdom, to endeavour by Holineſs in this Life to attain to Happineſs in the Life to come, whatever worldly Advantages we may loſe by our ſo doing: For 'tis better to ſecure that Bleſſedneſs in the next Life, which will never end *when it is once begun*; than to part with ſuch an everlaſting Happineſs for the ſhort and fooliſh Joys of a wicked Life at preſent, which at the beſt is mixt with many Sorrows and Croſſes which do often exceed its beſt Satisfactions, and will end at laſt in a Shame equal to the baſeneſs of thoſe Sins which Men do ſo inconſiderately Commit.

It is not Power, and Authority, great Wealth, the Splendor of Worldly Dignity, or the largeſt Stock of Wit or Underſtanding, which will ſecure the Happineſs of Heaven to Mankind if they want true Goodneſs; *that holy Place being fit for none but thoſe who are in a holy State*, which is but ſeldom found where Riches abound, for thoſe do generally make Men proud and inſolent Contemners of God's Law, Deſ-

Deſpiſers of the Poor, and Oppreſſors of others; and helps them to run into all manner of Pride and Exceſs, and to ſpend their time in vain Sports and vitious Pleaſures, which whoever does ſhall never be Saved: For which reaſon our Saviour tells us, That *'tis hard for a Rich Man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*, Mat. 19. 23. Such therefore muſt expect no other Happineſs but what they enjoy in this Life, ſince at Death they muſt bid farewel for ever to all their preſent Wealth and Greatneſs, according to that ſaying of one who was made Rich, and the Glory of whoſe Houſe was increaſed, That *when he Died he ſhould carry nothing away, his Glory ſhould not deſcend after him*, Pſal. 49. 27. The delicious Diet which covers the Tables of rich Men, their coſtly Wines, their ſplendid Habitations, their gay Apparel, their charming Muſick, their merry Company, and their other Delights will forſake them at Death; and when they are Condemned in Judgment, they ſhall be caſt down for ever into the helliſh Torments of the Damned, there to bewail *to all Eternity* their own Madneſs and Folly, in proudly and baſely Condemning the Authority of that God, whoſe Vengeance they will not then be able in the leaſt to withſtand, when the Fury of his Wrath ſhall be poured out upon inſolent and prophane minded Sinners, who did count themſelves too great to be ſubject to the Law of God.

And if it ſhall be thus Miſerable hereafter with the Rich who are Lovers of Unrighteouſneſs, then poor and beggarly Sinners can have no reaſon to think to eſcape, for they have not the Temptations to damning Sin which the Rich have, nothing being ſo effectual to excite Men to Rebel againſt God as a vaſt Wealth; and therefore 'tis ſaid, That Men *who will*

will be Rich fall into Temptation and a Snare, and into many fooliſh and hurtful Luſts, which drown Men in Deſtruction and Perdition: For the Love of many is the Root of all Evil, 1 Tim. 6. 9, 10. But Poverty is proper to humble Men and make them Serious and Conſiderate; which is the chief thing that works a Reformation in ſinful Mortals *in their Affliction*; ſays God, *They will ſeek me early*, Hoſ. 5. 15. and for that reaſon *the Poor of this World* are ſaid to be *rich in Faith, and Heirs of the Kingdom which he hath promiſed to them that love him*, Ja. 2. 5. whereas on the contrary, *not many wiſe Men after the Fleſh, not many Mighty, not many Noble are called*, 1 Cor. 1. 26. The Poor therefore being under leſs Temptation to ſlight God and deſpiſe his Precepts than the Rich are, can have no reaſon to eſcape the ſame Damnation, if they do evil, as the Rich too often do.

Which being ſeriouſly conſidered, would be enough to make both Rich and Poor, who are Sinners, reſolve no longer to be Slaves *to any degrading Luſt, or Vile and ſenſeleſs Paſſion*, all Sin being of ſo ignoble a Nature, as not only to make them unfit for Heaven, *where there is nothing but true Holineſs, which ſo long as Men continue Sinners they will abhor.* But it debaſes them alſo in point of Reputation in this Life, and renders them contemptible in the Eyes of all thoſe wiſe and honourable Perſons, *who aim at nothing ſo much as God's Glory and the Publick Good*, nothing but a virtuous and honeſt Life being ſuitable either to the Purity of the other World, or the Worthineſs of Man's Nature in this Life, who are Creatures that were deſign'd by God not to Eat, and Drink and Sleep only, much leſs to paſs away their Days in Drunkenneſs and Swearing, in Nonſenſe

ſenſe and Folly, or in idle Sports and expenſive Paſtimes, but to employ thoſe Powers and Abilities which he hath endow'd them with in Glorifying their great Creator, *who hath given them their Being, and all the innocent Comforts which they can enjoy*, and to do thoſe things, *and thoſe only*, which tend to the true Good both of themſelves and others. But alas, *inſtead of thus nobly employing their Talents*, the greateſt Part of both Men and Women do content themſelves with ſome low and mean Gratifications of Fleſh and Senſe, *which ſerve only to pleaſe and delight a corrupt Nature*, inſtead of ſtriving to attain to that true Glory which unfeigned Virtue does beſtow on every wiſe and godly Man.

Reſolve therefore to ſhew your ſelves Perſons of more noble and generous Minds, than to be contented to be ſuch vile Slaves or Drudges to the Devil, and by the help of that Divine Aſſiſtance which, every one ſhall have who reſolves to do his Duty, break through all his Snares, till you have attained *to the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God*, Rom. 8. 21. And you will find, that as you get the Maſtery of your ſinful Inclinations, *by reſolving to forbear every unreaſonable thing that God has forbid*, and do accuſtom your ſelves more and more *to a Pious, Harmleſs, Good-natur'd and Honeſt Converſation*, you will be ſo ſpiritualiz'd at laſt in your Affections, as to be raiſed ſo much above the World and all its tempting Charms, that you will look down with a wiſe and holy Contempt and Scorn upon all the deſpicable Vanities and ſinful Satisfactions *which fooliſh Mortals do now ſo much doat on, or admire and adore*, till being conformed in a truly ſaving Degree to the Life of Chriſt, *the great Example and Pattern of all true and noble Virtue*, you will have ſuch a ſenſible Fore-

Foretaſt of the heavenly Felicities, that like your Lord and Maſter, *who, for the Joy that was ſet before him, endured the Croſs and deſpiſed the Shame*, Heb. 12. 2. you will go on boldly as he did in the Profeſſion of the Truth and in the Practice of a righteous Life, tho' it ſhould deprive you of the Favour of the greateſt Men, involve you in the worſt Reproaches, or endanger the loſs either of your Livelihood or your Life; for this your preſent Senſe of the noble Nature of the future Happineſs, by that pure Delight and Divine Joy which Goodneſs does afford at preſent, will be ſufficient to convince you, that *theſe light Afflictions, which are but for a Moment, will work for you a more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory*, 2 Cor. 4. 17. And this will free you entirely from the enſlaving Power of all the ſenſeleſs Vanities and wicked Follies that ſhall be found in the Age wherein you live, and from all the Corruptions that are in the World through Luſt; ſo that living as Perſons, *who look for the Reſurrection of the Dead, and the Life of the World to come*, you will think nothing too great to be parted with, or ſo good as not to be deſpiſed, in order to attain to that Divine Felicity wherein Mankind, when immortaliz'd, *ſhall be filled with all the Fulneſs of God*, Eph. 3. 12.

'Twas this Expectation that did encourage the Saints in all Ages to withſtand, not only the Allurements of this vain and deceitful World, but the Power alſo and Rage of their moſt cruel Perſecutors; for *they reſiſted unto Blood and wrought Righteouſneſs*, in ſpite of all the Craft of Hell, or Malice and Cruelty of wicked Men, who always did abhor them that truly love Virtue, becauſe 'tis a Reproach to their own evil Doings, which Virtue the Saints of old did ſtedfaſtly continue in to the end of their Days,

Days, that they might be worthy to enjoy that Divine Vision of God, *in whose presence is fulness of Joy, and at whose right Hand are Pleasures for evermore*, Psal. 16. 11. and the End of every other Man's patient Continuance in well-doing will be the same; for they shall partake of that unmixt and never ending Happiness *at the Resurrection of the Just*, Luke 14. 14. if they seek for Glory and Honour by well-doing, and avoid constantly those wicked Actions which God hath forbid, or which they would condemn, should they be done to themselves by other Men.

F I N I S.

Post-

Poſtſcript.

IT being poſſible that ſome may be offended becauſe I have adventured to aſſert, That thoſe are good Chriſtians who live good Lives, *tho' they ſhould err in affirming, That in the State between Death and the Reſurrection, no Man will be ſenſible of Joy or Sorrow. I have thought fit to let them know, that the Learned Mr.* Du Pinn *in his* Abridgment of the Fathers, *has noted, That* Juſtin Martyr, Ireneus, Minutius Felix, *and* Arnobuis *were of this Sentiment. And the ſame is affirmed of them, and ſome others by Mr.* Edwards *in his* Free Inquiries into Truth and Error. *And yet theſe ancient Fathers are counted good Chriſtians; and if ſo, Why then ſhould others be counted Hereticks, who believe the ſame in theſe Days, as many who are Virtuous do both among the Church-Men and Diſſenters? And I ſee no Reaſon, if they live good Lives, but theſe latter ſhould be the Objects of God's Mercy; as thoſe other Men are believed to be by all who are Men of true Chriſtian Moderation. For Opinions or Principles are no farther to be eſteemed neceſſary, than they do help to make us perfectly Honeſt and Pious. Since no Notion which is not proper to engage us to*

live

live the Life of Heaven while here on Earth, can be any part of that ſaving Religion by which Mankind ſhall get to Heaven at laſt. It is certainly a great Miſtake to think, That there is no Salvation out of the Pale of our own Sect or Party: For Salvation belongs to all good Men in every Profeſſion, who are Sincere and Hearty in their Love to God, and do no Hurt wilfully, but all the Good they can do to others; nothing being a Hereſie but that Belief which does engage us to take from God his due Glory, and live ungodly Lives. 'Tis an evil Heart and wicked Hands, and not a Head that errs in ſome Things, which will be the Cauſe of our final Condemnation. Errors therefore are never Damnable till they engage Men to Diſhonour God, to Injure themſelves, or to do Hurt to other Men; and by conſequence all Men that are Pious, and Sober, and Chaſt, and Honeſt in their Dealings, ſhould Love others ſincerely who are like themſelves in point of Practice, tho' they cannot be all of one Mind in other Matters. His Faith indeed is the beſt who has the feweſt Errors, but his Religion is the beſt who lives the moſt Holy and Righteous Life: For Men's Reward hereafter will be according to the Goodneſs of their Works, and not according to the Goodneſs of their Words.

FINIS.